**Kashmiri Leadership and the Quality of Advice**

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The question of the four components of Kashmir case, namely, rights, dignity, security and self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir has a well-recognised UN template. Government of Pakistan has agreed to strengthen these efforts and accelerate the compliance with the UN template by providing political, moral and a diplomatic support.

To achieve this, the Government of Pakistan has inked a written agreement called the Karachi Agreement of April 1949 with the Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. In addition, the former has retained a share of powers in the affairs of AJK in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Act 1974. The relationship of the “entire state” with Pakistan has to be discussed as a consequence of article 257 of the constitution of Pakistan.

The relationship of the State with Pakistan could take the form of a province, or a relationship agreed in the Stand Still Agreement in August 1947 or any other form, as desired by the people. The AJK leaders currently appointed in Azad Kashmir politics by the leaders of the political parties in Pakistan, would not qualify to set the terms of negotiations for a future relationship, required under article 257 of the constitution of Pakistan.

In the case of an accession with Pakistan, we shall have to find independent and unattached academics and experts (Kashmiris and Pakistanis or as required like Holland found in 2017, to carry out the historic review of the Dutch army’s role during Indonesian war of Independence) to finalise the contours of the future relationship of Kashmir with Pakistan.

The State is fractured into three administrations and is a home for many communities. Therefore, the process has to be inclusive and convince all of its merit. It has to be inclusive to absorb and assure all other communities. It is not easy and the kind of simplification being promoted by the establishment would not work. It will fail, like all previous projects.

The political strengths of this Government could be measured against its total non-action and no-response to the Indian action of 5 August 2019.

Therefore, success or failure of the people of Kashmir in engaging the United Nations or Government of India depends on the quality of advice and input from Pakistan. Former chief of RAW AS Dulat has described at page 268 in his book “Kashmir – The Vajpayee Years” the ability of Kashmiri leadership seen during their engagement with the Indian side. He has said, “And if Delhi has not been sincere about giving Kashmir anything of consequence or substance, then the Kashmiri leadership also does not have the gumption to extract anything”.

We have a leadership in the Indian administered Kashmir (now occupied Kashmir) and one in Azad Kashmir on the Pakistani side of cease fire line. The latter has independent resources, independent institutions and 24×7 advice of the Government of Pakistan at its disposal. It is required to provide a provisional better administration and work for the realisation of UNCIP Resolutions on Kashmir. The political strengths of this Government could be measured against its total non-action and no-response to the Indian action of 5 August 2019. It has exposed itself and does not reflect well for Kashmir case. People in the Valley have a grievance.

AJK Government has assumed a higher burden of responsibility in the Constitution and in the various agreements made with the Government of Pakistan. Unfortunately the culture and quality of politics in Azad Kashmir is not as required under the Provisional Declaration of 24 October 1947 or the Karachi Agreement of 1949. The political leadership in Azad Kashmir is appointed by the political party heads in Pakistan. It has caused and promoted a disruptive and divisive politics in Azad Kashmir. The variables in political interest and division in the Pakistani politics have been transported into Azad Kashmir.

Azad Kashmir Government does not seem to be readying itself to discharge its duties assumed under UNCIP Resolutions, Provisional Declaration of 24 October 1947, and Karachi Agreement of April 1949 and for preparing to negotiate the terms of accession with Pakistan. All this is a consequence of forcing India to return to its specified role in Jammu and Kashmir.

This needs hard work, transparency and accountability. We see that the leadership in AJK would not sweat itself in that regard but would rest at perpetuating the status quo of power and perks. The interest in UN template on Kashmir does not extend beyond a political statement. Therefore, it has remained an effective tool to strike a quid pro quo. The intra-disciplinary arrangement on Kashmir does not flex itself beyond this.

It is evident that we could not arrange an independent and expert advice to the leadership that had, arranged itself under Hurriyat umbrella. Hurriyat itself did not surface as a democratic, transparent and accountable discipline. It did not work for an input and the five individuals took upon their shoulders, all on their own and confronted the institutional Indian wisdom. It was a mistake. Government of Pakistan and various elements in the Government of Pakistan could have, punctuated the Hurriyat wisdom, by providing a genuine political, moral and diplomatic support.

Kashmiri leadership has been meeting the leaders and others in the Governments of India and Pakistan. Hurriyat leaders met L K Advani and Prime Minister Vajpayee in January 2004 and in March 2004. Chairman Moulvi Abbas Ansari, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Prof. Ghani, Bilal Lone and Fazal-haq Qureshi were respectable people, but none of them had any understanding of or briefing on the UN template on Kashmir. They were ill prepared to sit with the Indian institutional ability at the table.

A S Dulat writes, “So they were invited for a cup of tea and samosas and jalebis with the prime minister. I took them in, and the five of them stood there and one by one said their pieces…Once the five had finished they all looked at each other.” “Vajpayee, as usual, was silent for a long time. Finally “Advani is talking to you,” he said. “Let that go on”.

Dulat writes that at the second meeting on 27 March 2004, “the government said we should now get down to the nitty-gritty. What is that you want” Advani asked. Not one single Hurriyat leader said anything. Finally, Prof. Ghani said, “Next time we will come prepared with our ideas. That was that, and they agreed to meet that June”. Dulat writes, “Suppose in that meeting, the Mirwaiz had repeated the three points he had mentioned to me over dinner in May 2003, and asked if they could be done. That would have put Advani and the government in an awkward position, for they would have had to deliver. Instead, they kept asking for vague things, like confidence building measures by releasing twelve persons. The problem was that the separatist leadership has let down Kashmir time and again”.

On 27 March 2004, Hurriyat leadership had been in office for 11 years since its establishment in July 1993. So, ill-prepared and not to have a written paper for exchange with the Government of India, is a collective failure including the Government of Pakistan and the Government of Azad Kashmir. The negotiating capabilities of AJK leadership with the Government of Pakistan are no different to the capabilities exposed in the two meetings on 22 January 2004 and 27 March 2004 with the Indian leadership. There is a serious question on leadership and the quality of advice that it gets from Pakistan. The intra-agency discipline in charge of Kashmir has to come out of simplicity mode and insulation.

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